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THE AMERICAN JOURNAL

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(CONTINUING HEBRAICA)

VOLUME XXIX APRIL, 1913 NUMBER 3

BUSINESS DOCUMENTS OF THE HAMMURABI PERIOD

BY LEROY WATERMAN

The Bu. 91–5–9 Collection of Cuneiform Tablets comprises approximately three thousand. It has furnished material for Harper's *Letters*, Thompson's *Reports*, King's *Magic*, and Klauber's *Politisch-Religiöse Texte*, but by far the larger number, so far published, consist of Business Documents from the period of the Ist Babylonian Dynasty. Two hundred and thirty-four of the latter were first published by Pinches in *CT*, II, IV, VI, VIII, and nineteen more are now given by King in *CT*, XXXIII. Forty-four others of the Assyrian Period are published by Johns in *ADD*.

Sufficient material to stimulate any widespread interest in the Contract Literature was first made available by Strassmaier,[1] whose work included the texts of one hundred and nine Early Babylonian Contracts. Naturally the very limited knowledge of these texts at the time of publication led to inaccuracies in Strassmaier's copies which considerably affect their usefulness.

No attempt is here made to follow the interpretation of this literature as a whole, but attention is called to the more important works that concern the period of the Ist Dynasty of Babylon. For the wider literature, cf. Johns, *LCL*, and Weber. Meissner,[2] as a pioneer in this field, has done the largest and the most important single piece of work, publishing one hundred and eleven texts with

translations, transliterations, and notes. The extent and character of this work has made it the foundation of all that follows. For later modifications of some of his renderings, compare especially Schorr.[3]

Peiser[4] included transliterations and tentative translations of thirty-one texts of the Ist Dynasty.

Ungnad[5] has translated and classified all the contracts of the Hammurabi Period published before 1909. This work is invaluable for a rapid survey of the contents of these documents and the formulae used, but it makes no pretense at philological discussions nor explanation of renderings, and the names of witnesses are intentionally excluded from treatment. Ungnad has also published two hundred and four Early Babylonian Texts.

The most extensive and, in many respects, the most important literature on the philology of the contracts of the Ist Dynasty is based on the texts in *CT*. Pinches[6] gave transliterations and translations with notes of fifteen texts. Daiches[7] has given a detailed treatment of twenty-six purchase contracts, making it the most complete treatise on this particular class of documents. Schorr[3] handles eighty-five texts with thoroughness. His extensive analyses of contract formulae as well as the arrangement of this work make it a convenient handbook. It lacks a concordance of Personal Names and requires some revision in certain matters of interpretation and of formulae. Ungnad[8] publishes forty-three texts, thirty-three of them being found in *CT*. The book is supplied with a valuable glossary and concordance of Proper Names. The majority of the texts from *CT* treated above are from Bu. 91–5–9.

Publications of Ist Dynasty Contracts from other collections have been made: (1) by Ranke,[9] whose work embraces one hundred and nineteen texts together with the exposition of nineteen and a list of Proper Names; all of these texts have been translated by Ungnad;[5] (2) by Poebel, in the same series as the above, Vol. VI, Part 2, in which are included one hundred and thirty-eight texts, with the exposition of sample texts and the Date Formulae from the time of Hammurabi to the end of the Ist Dynasty; for other literature on the date formulae compare King[10] and Lindl;[11] (3) by Thureau-Dangin, who gives seventy-nine texts in one publication[12]

and six in another;[13] (4) by Langdon,[14] who furnishes forty-one texts and translations; (5) by Friedrich,[15] whose work consists of seventy-one texts and their exposition. These texts are badly broken, the readings are often uncertain, and the proposed renderings are to be used with caution.

For the Personal Names of this period, Ranke's[16] work is indispensable. Compare also his Thesis.[17]

The relation of these contracts to the Code of Hammurabi has been discussed by Kohler and Ungnad, see above, and by Meissner.[18] Its full extent will only be known when all the available material has been published.

The following texts from the Bu. 91–5–9 Collection will add a few more to those already at the disposal of scholars. They were copied by me at the British Museum during 1912–13. They include rental of land and houses, loans of money and grain, sales, receipts, bequests, and suits at law. In subsequent numbers of this Journal, it is hoped to publish other texts of the same character together with expositions and a List of Proper Names.

I wish especially to acknowledge my obligations to Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, the Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum. It was at his suggestion that the work was originally undertaken, and without his sympathy and assistance it would not have been possible to carry it out. I am indebted also to the other members of the Department, Messrs. King and Hall, for their unfailing courtesy. To Mr. King, I am also grateful for suggestions as to the published and unpublished texts of this Collection. For the opportunity to spend this year (1912–13) in the British Museum, I am indebted to my former teacher, Professor Robert Francis Harper.

NOTES

1. *Die altbabylonischen Verträge aus Warka: Verhandlungen des Berliner* (V) *Orientalisten Kongresses.*

2. *Beiträge zum altbabylonischen Privatrecht.*

3. *Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus der Zeit der I babylonischen Dynastie.*

4. *Texte juristischen und geschäftlichen Inhalts.*

5. *Hammurabi's Gesetz. Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler.*

6. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1897 and 1899.
7. *Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden* (*LSS*, I, 2).
8. *Selected Business and Legal Documents of the Hammurabi Period*, *SSS*, No. 9.
9. *Babylonian Legal and Business Documents from the Time of the First Dynasty of Babylon*, *BEUPa*, *S.A.*, Vol. VI.
10. *The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi.*
11. "Die Daten-Liste der ersten Dynastie von Babylon," *BA*, IV.
12. *Lettres et Contrats de l'époque de la Première Dynastie Babylonienne.*
13. *Revue d'archéologie*, VIII, 1–2.
14. *PSBA*, XXXIII and XXXIV.
15. "Altbabylonische Urkunden aus Sippara," *BA*, V.
16. *Early Babylonian Personal Names.*
17. *Die Personen-Namen in den Urkunden der Hammurabi Dynastie.*
18. "Theorie und Praxis im altbabylonischen Recht," *MVAG*, X.

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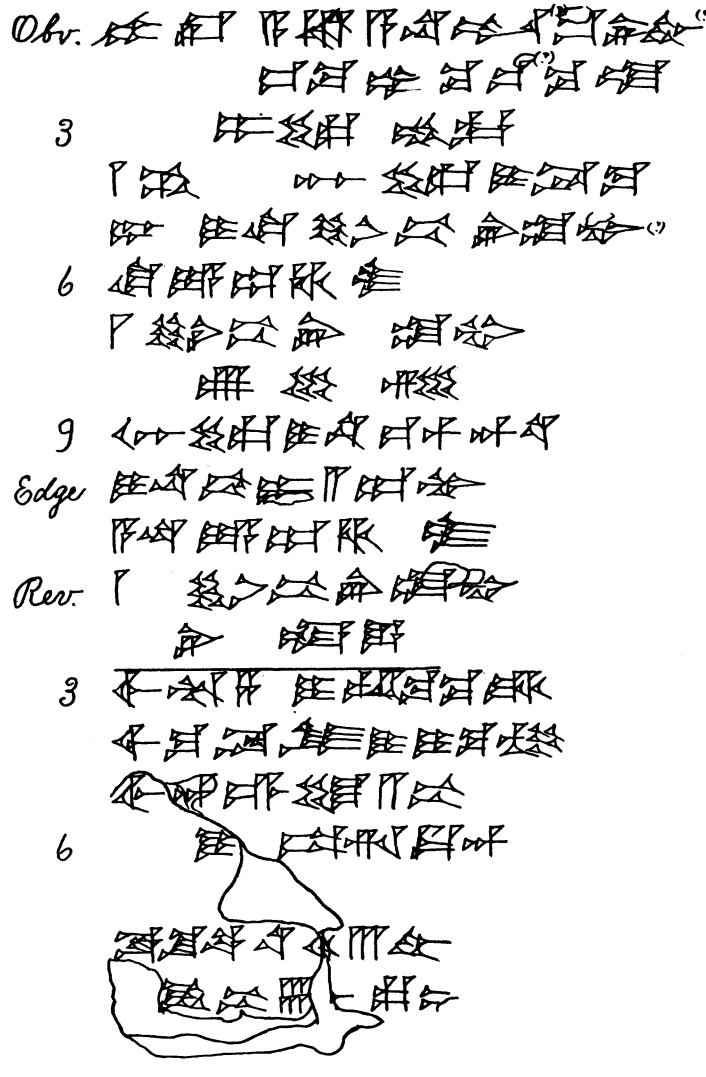

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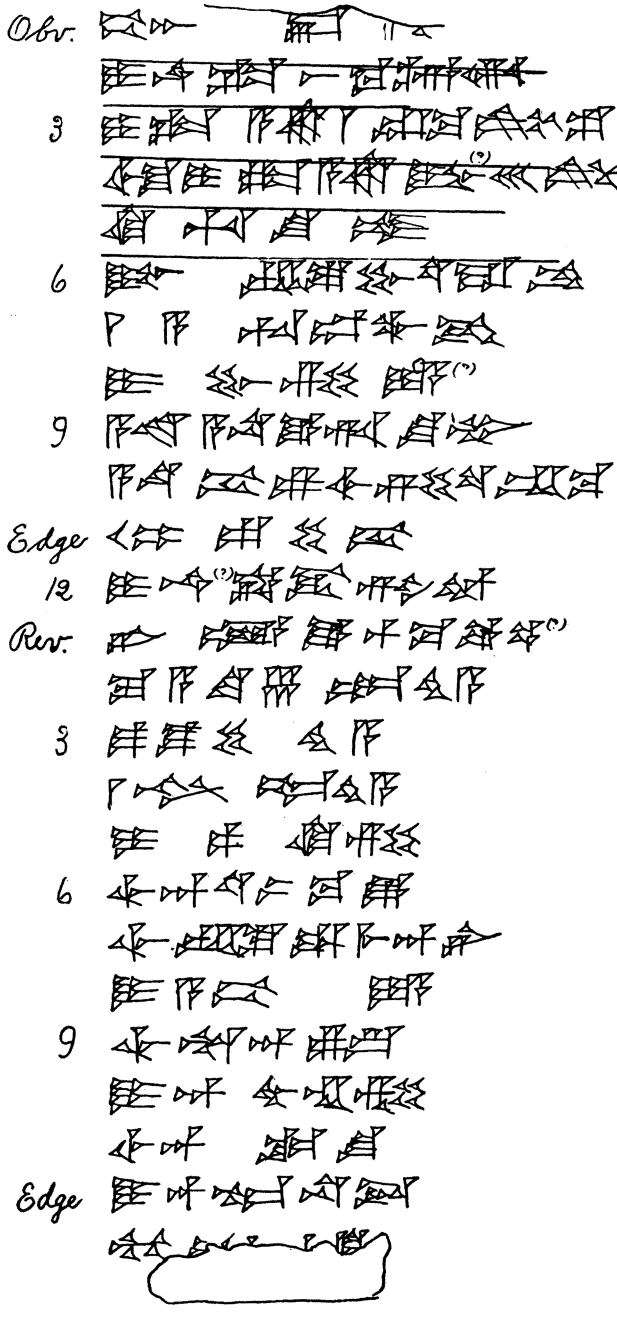

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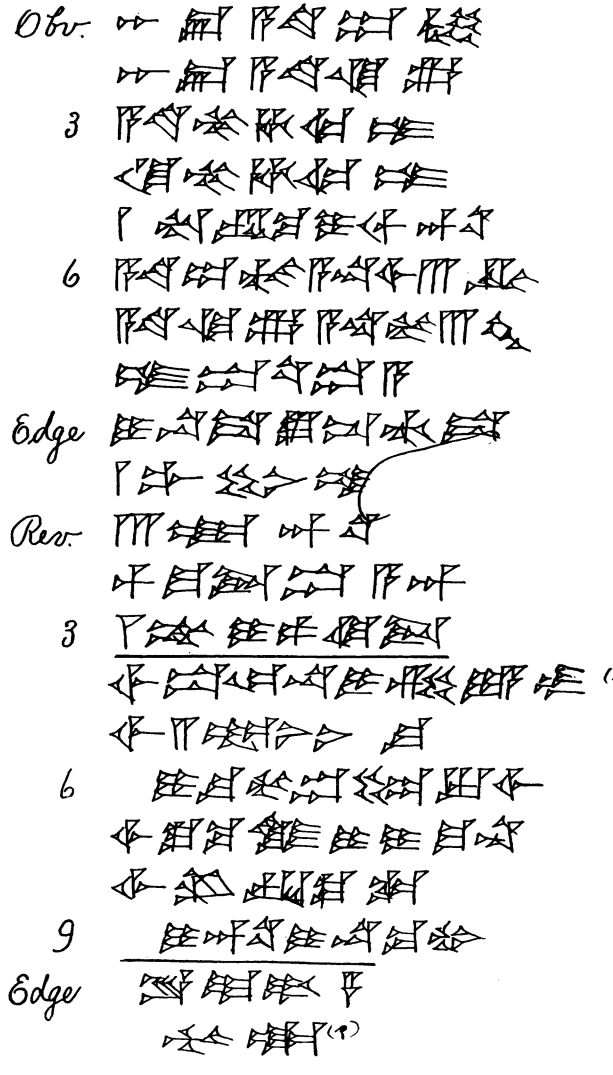

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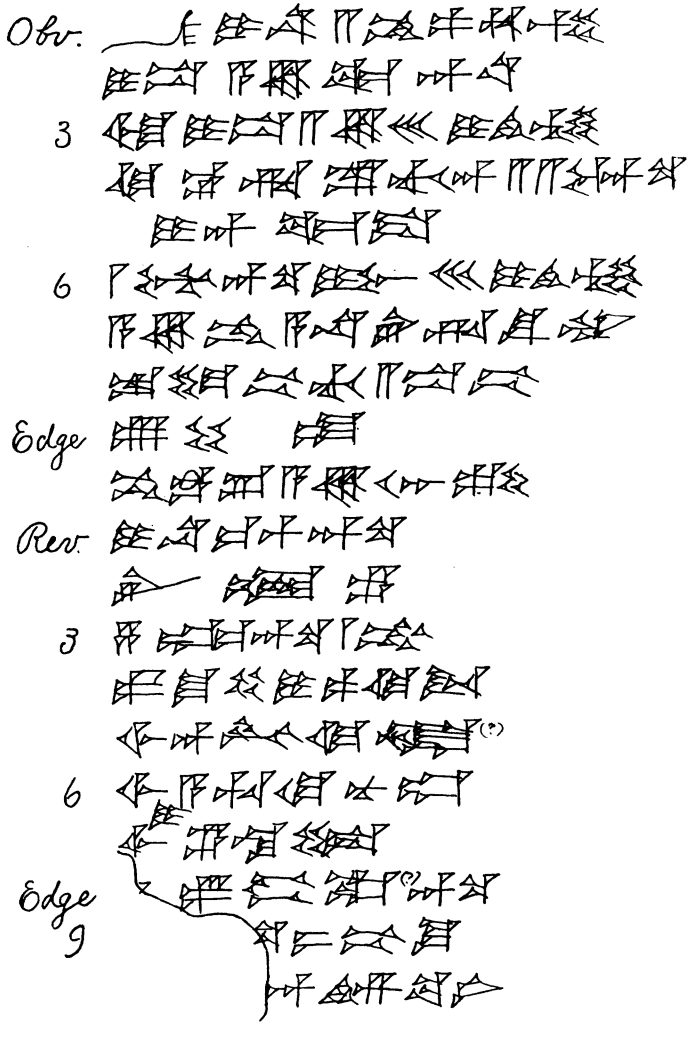

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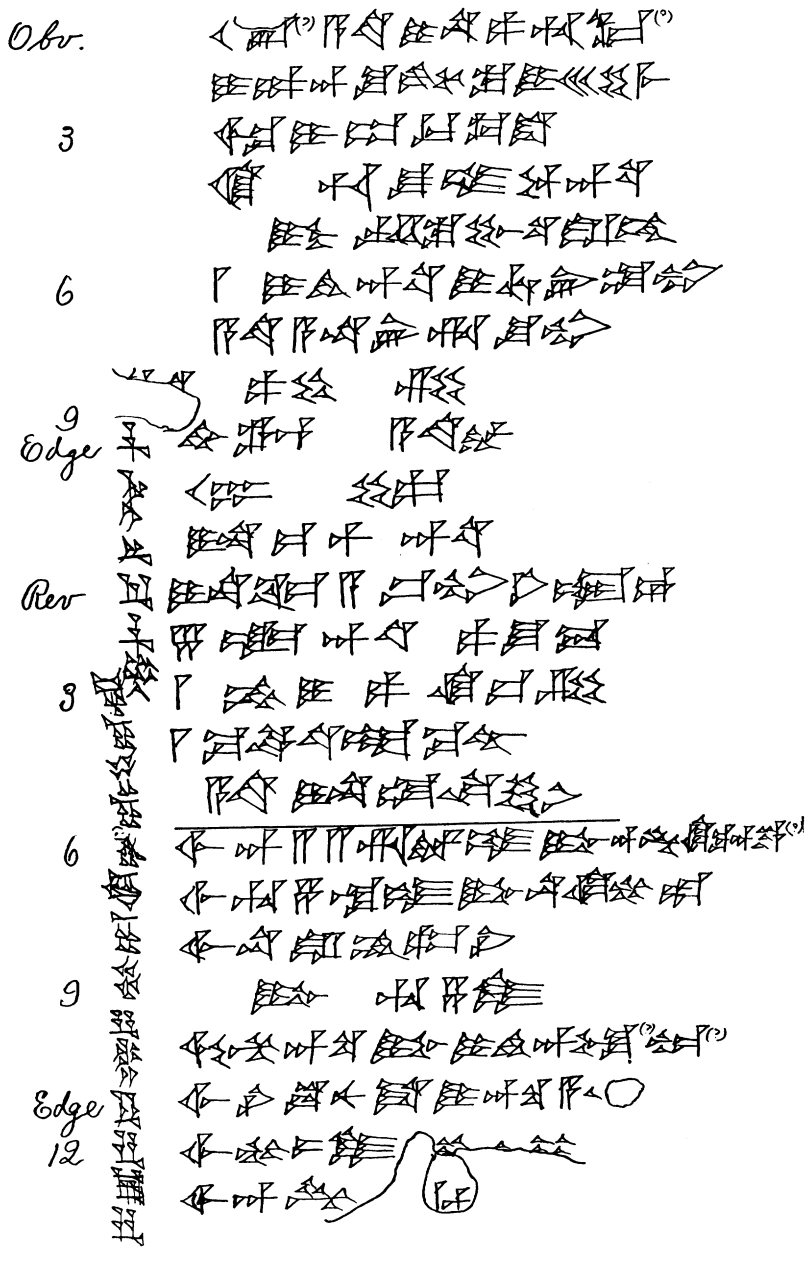

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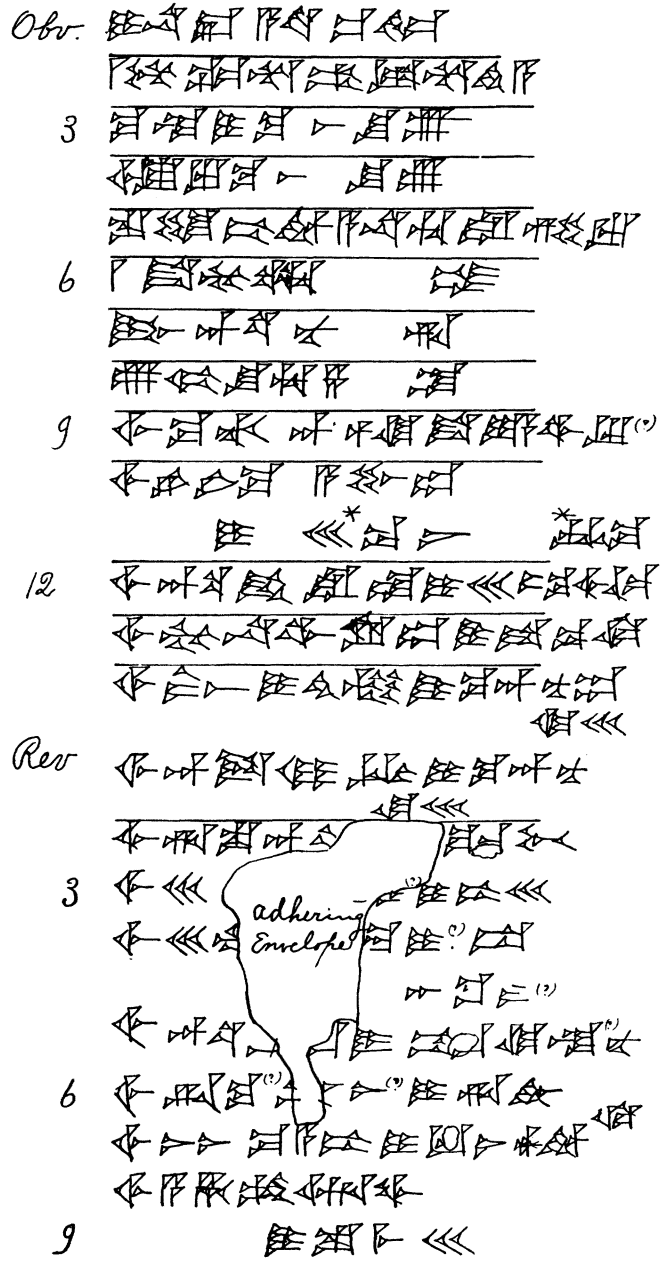

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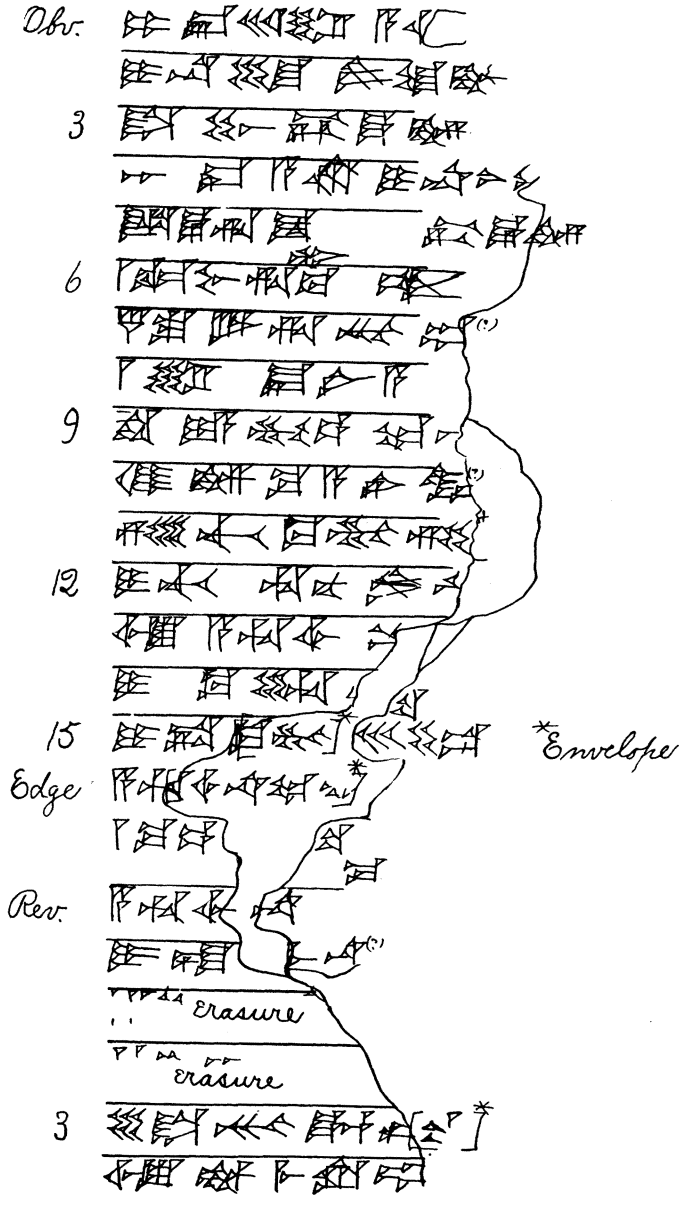

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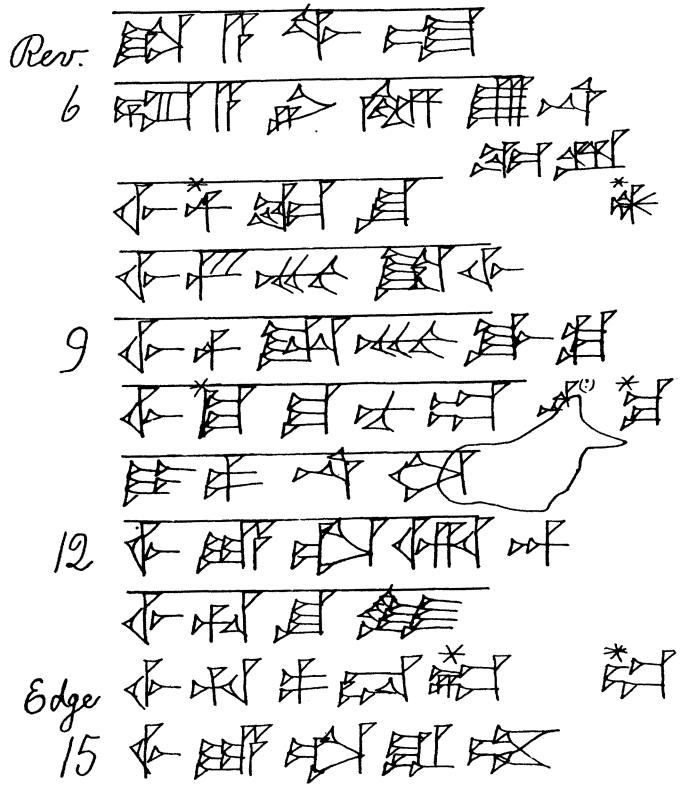

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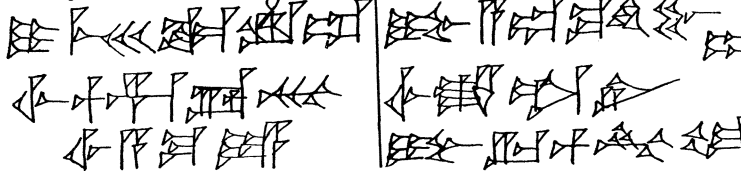

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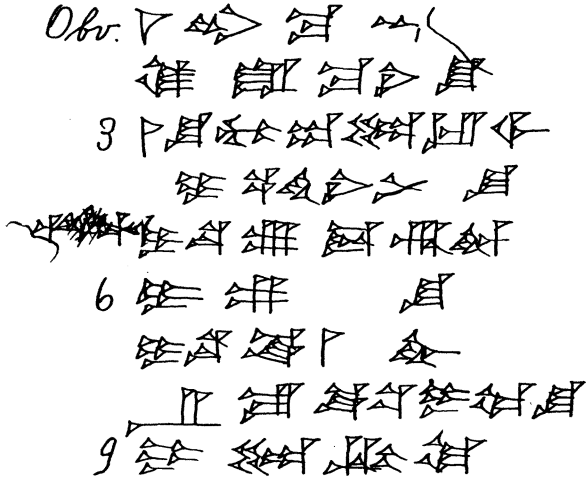

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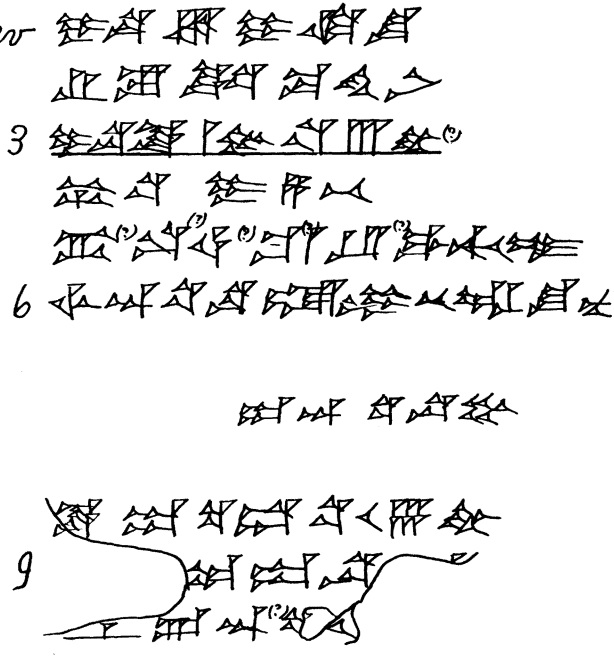

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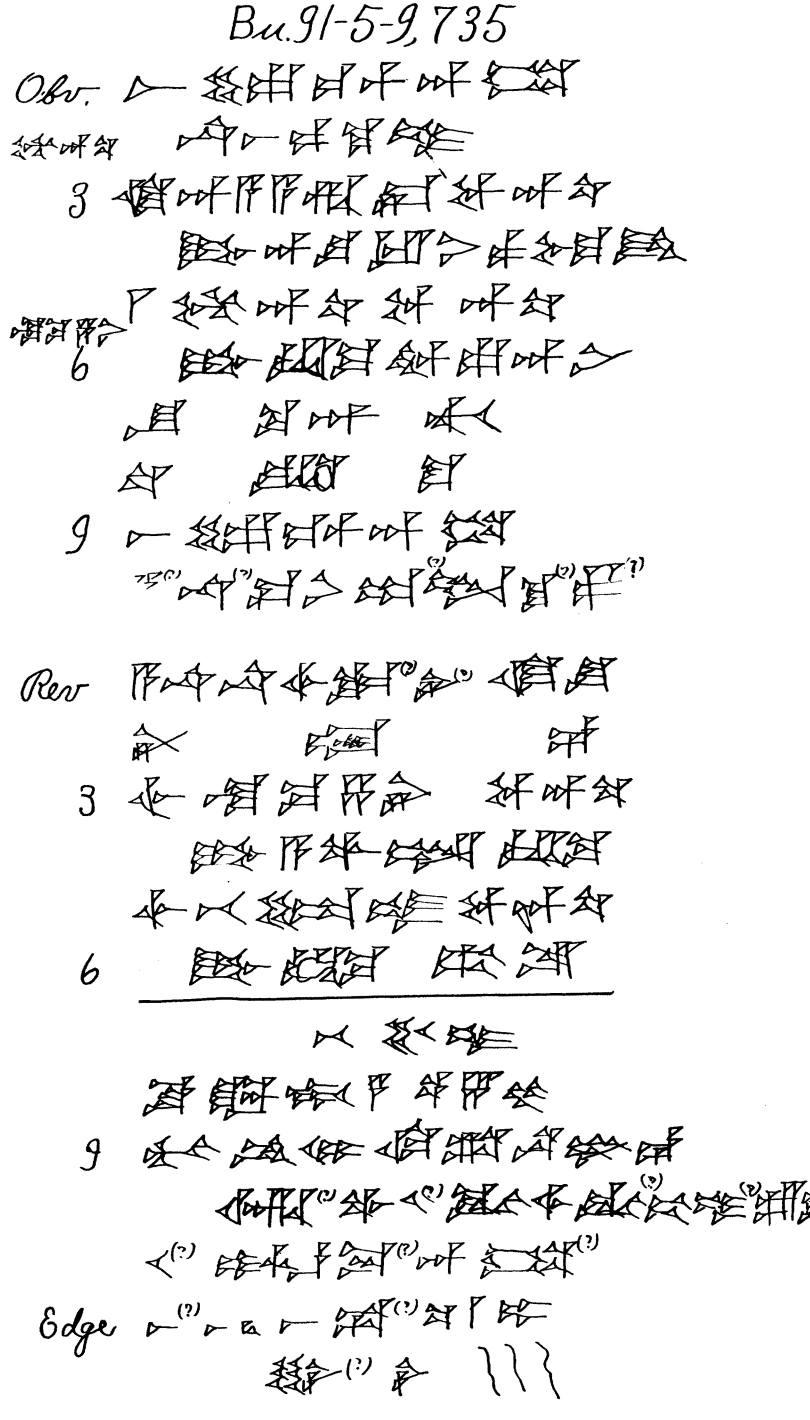

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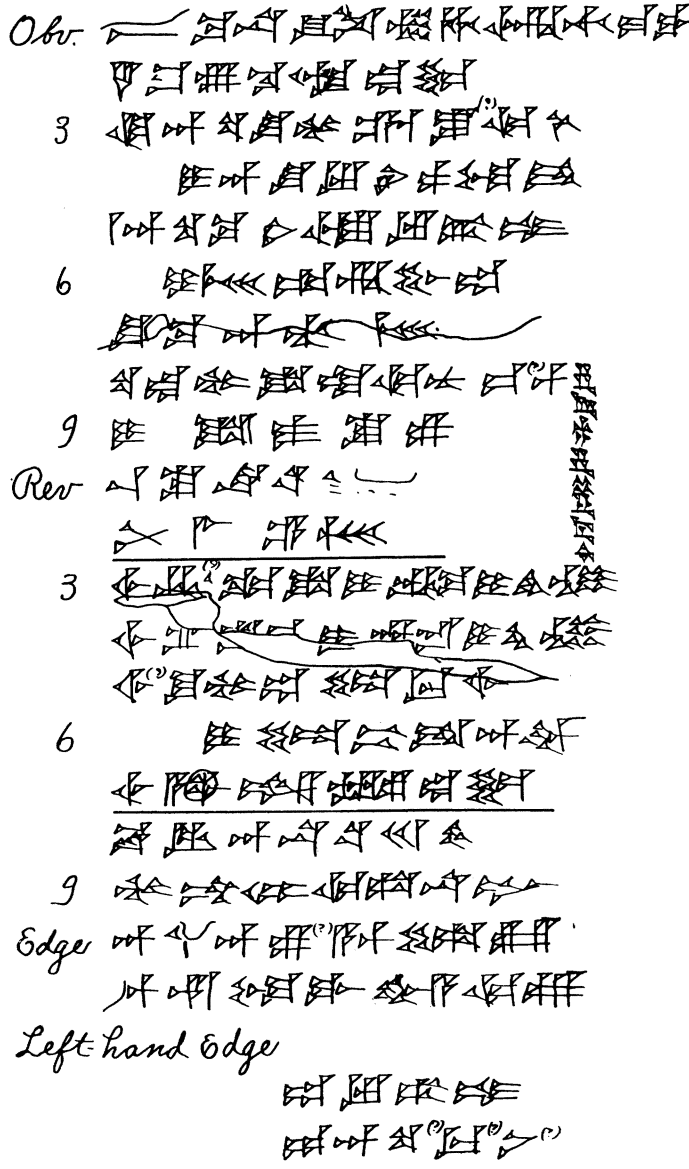

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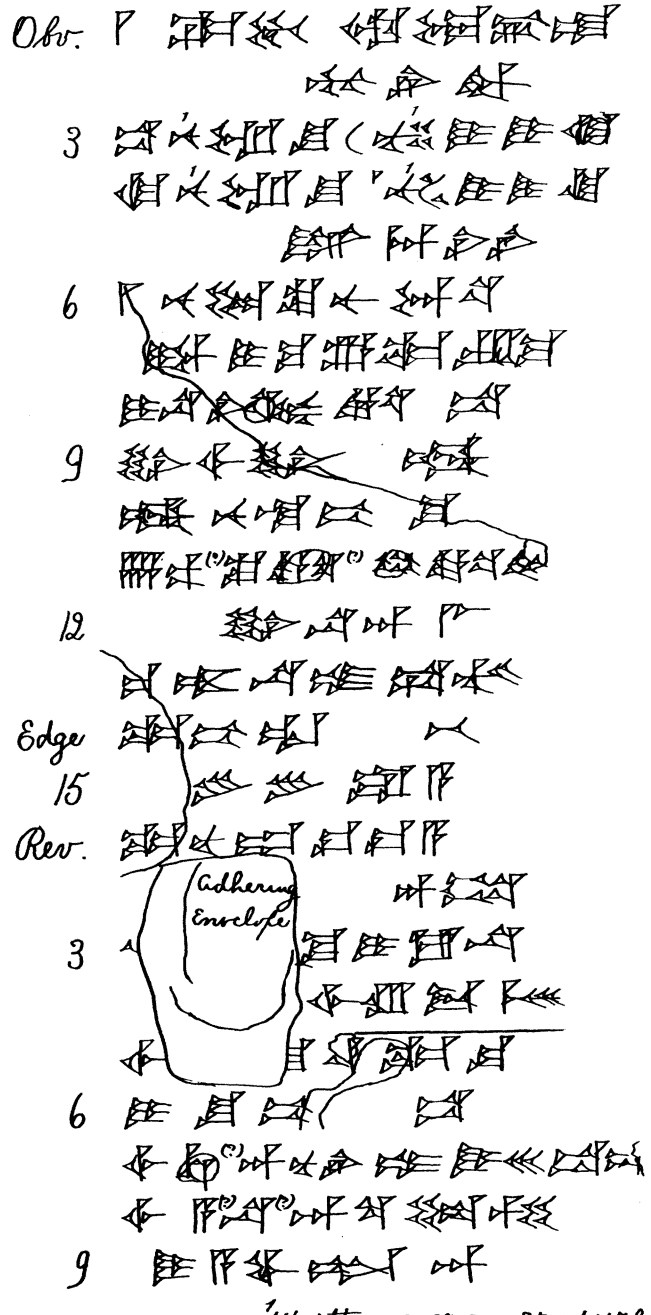

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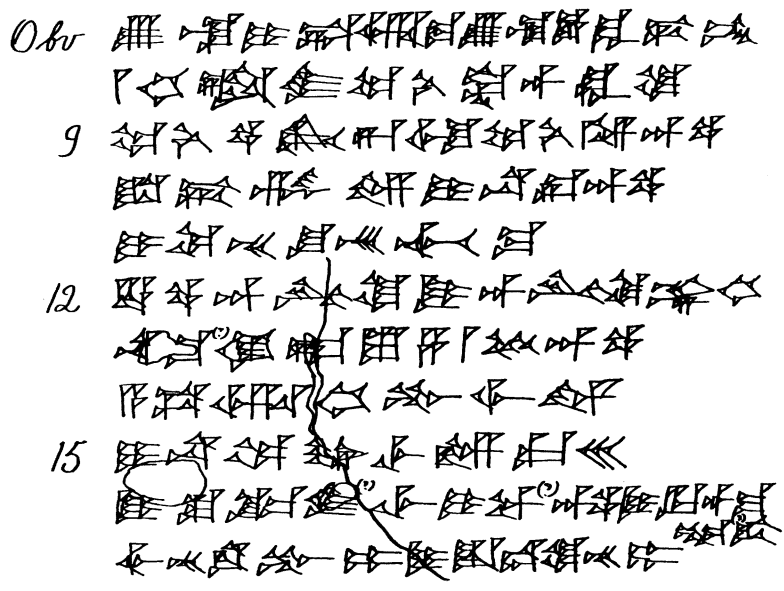

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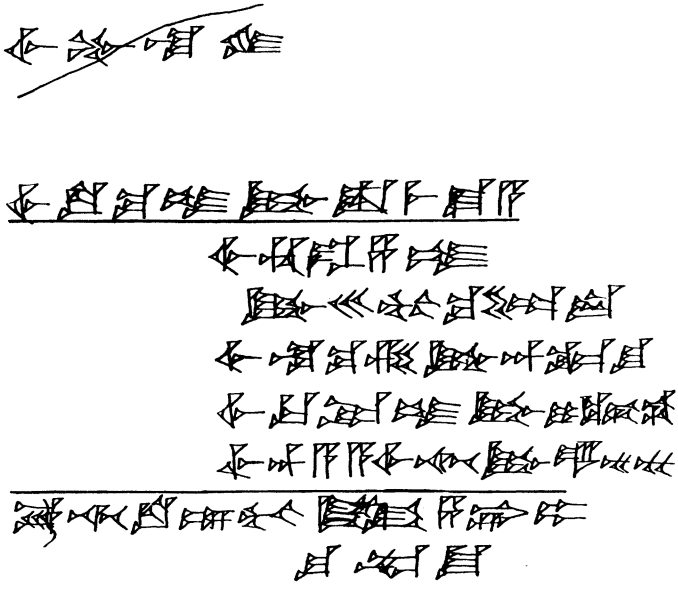

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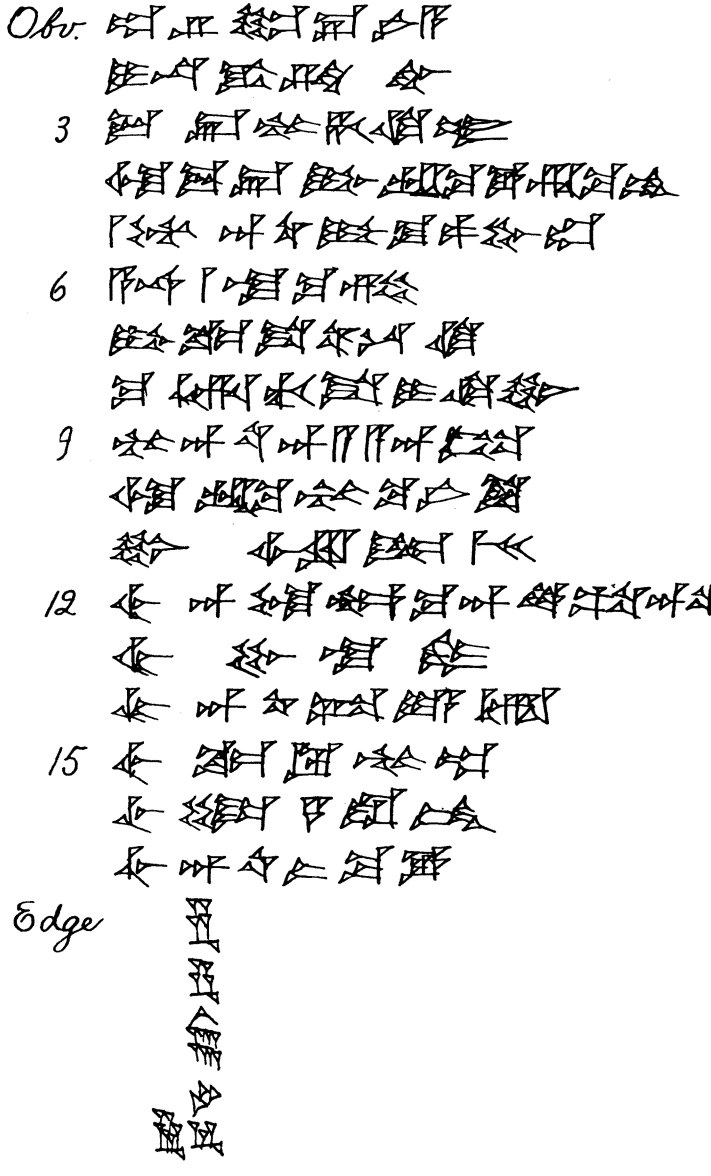

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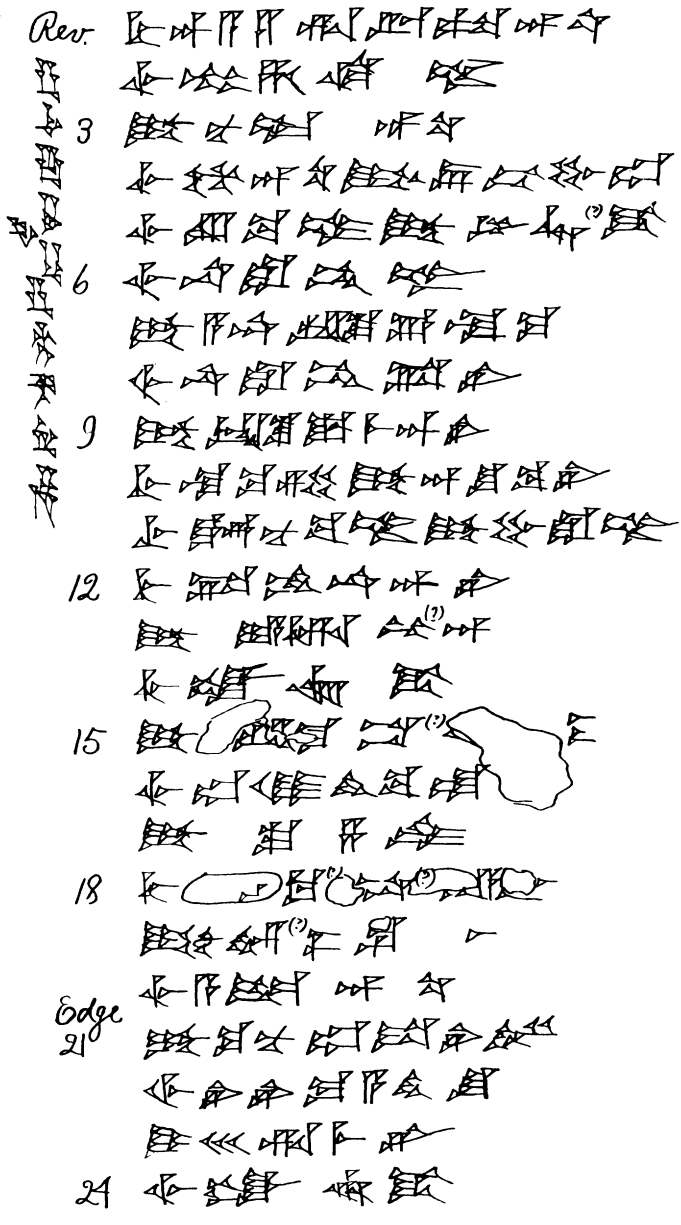

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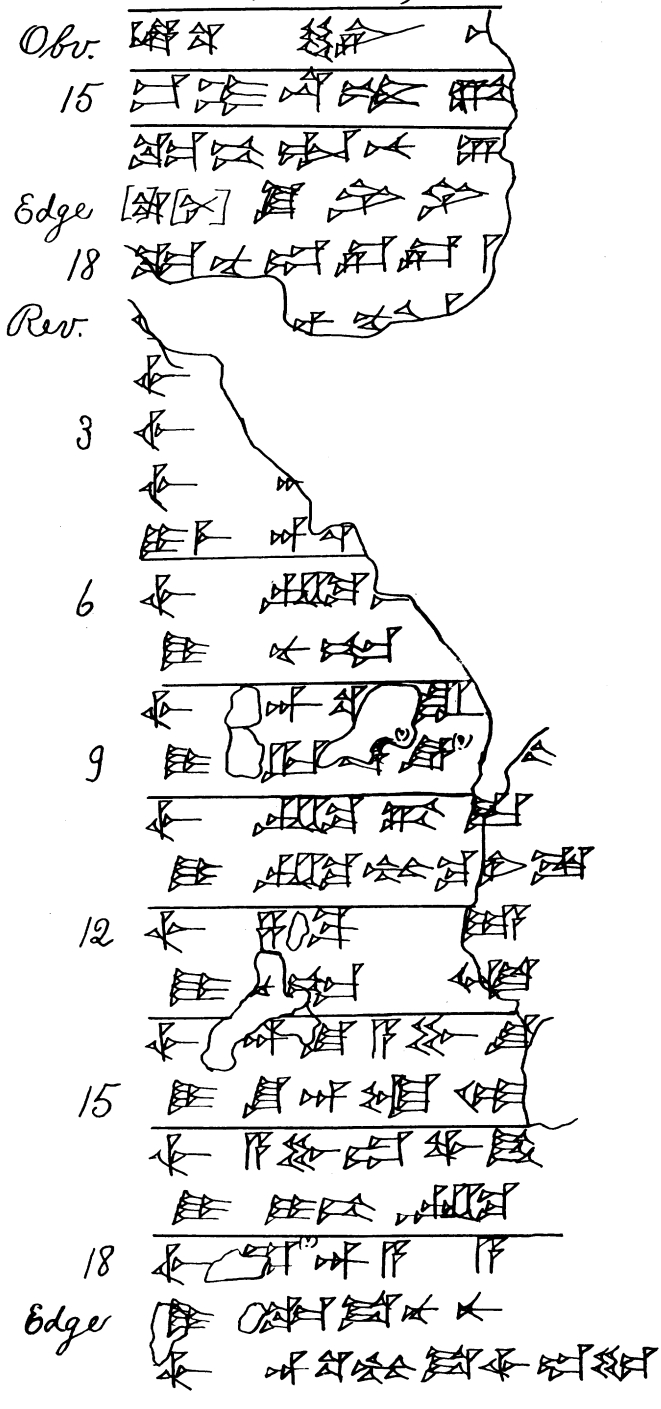

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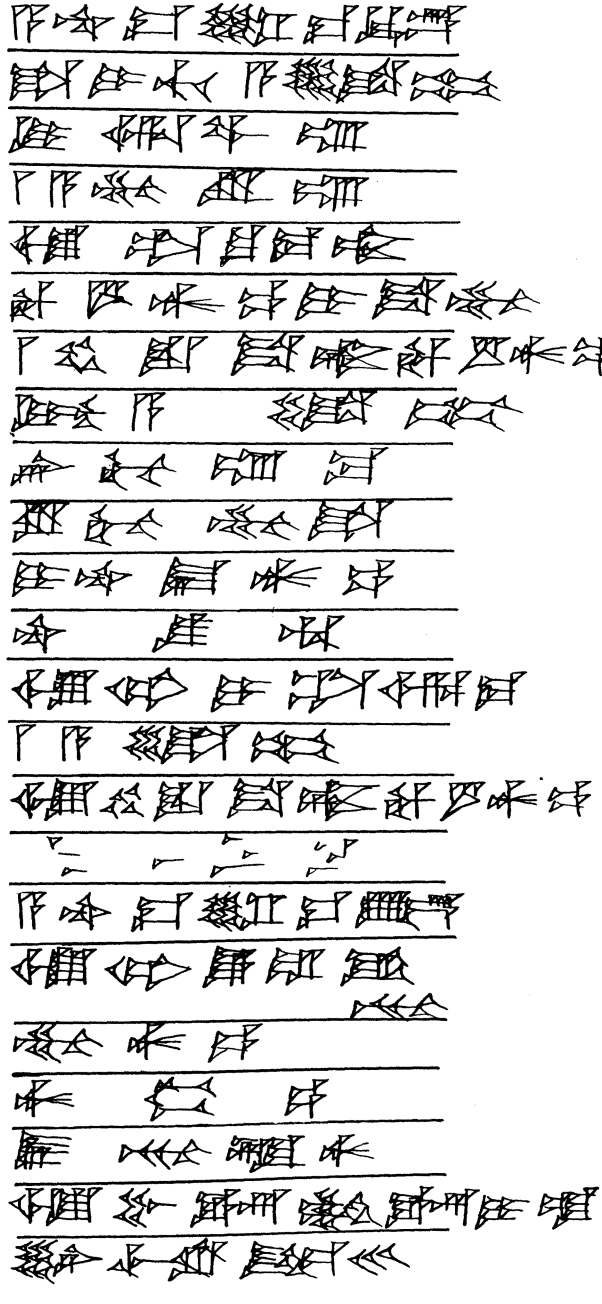

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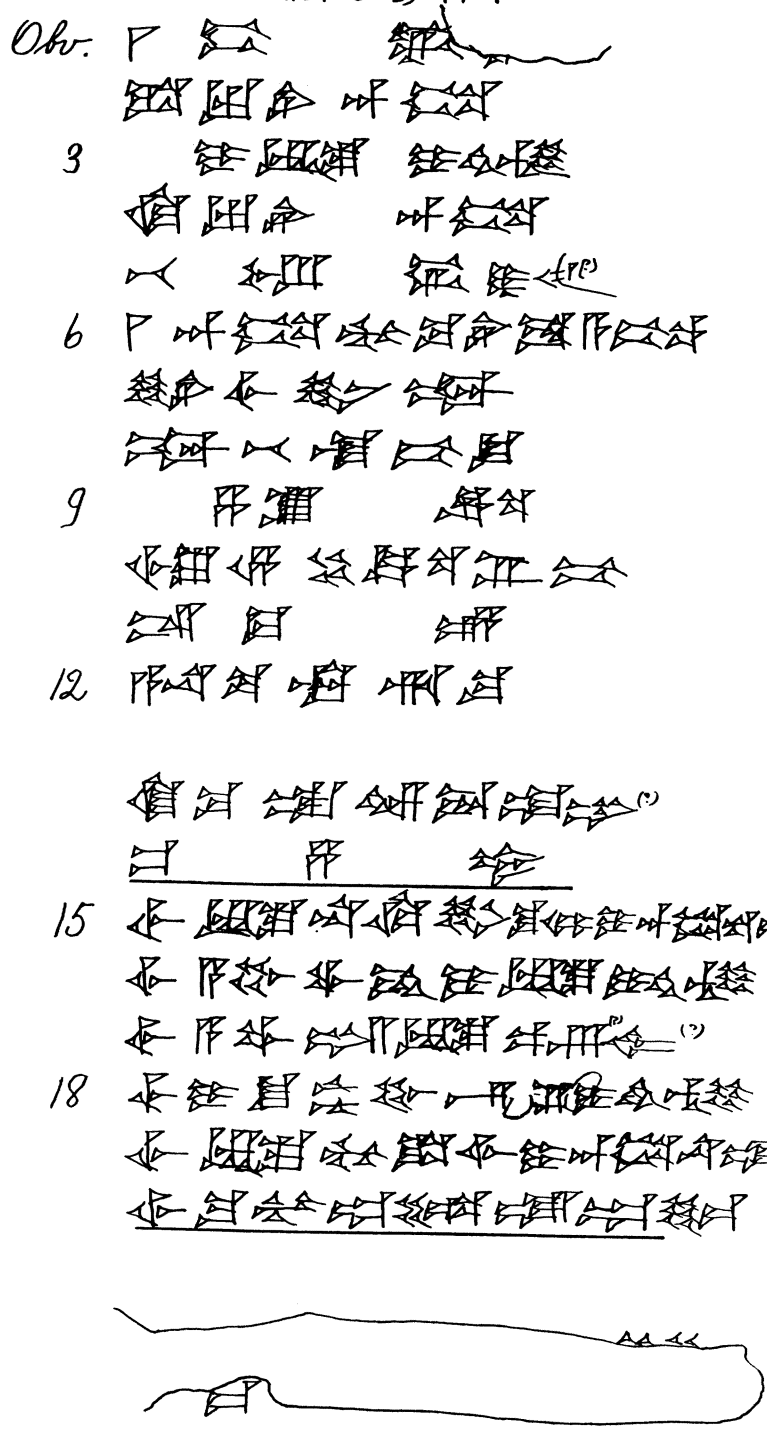

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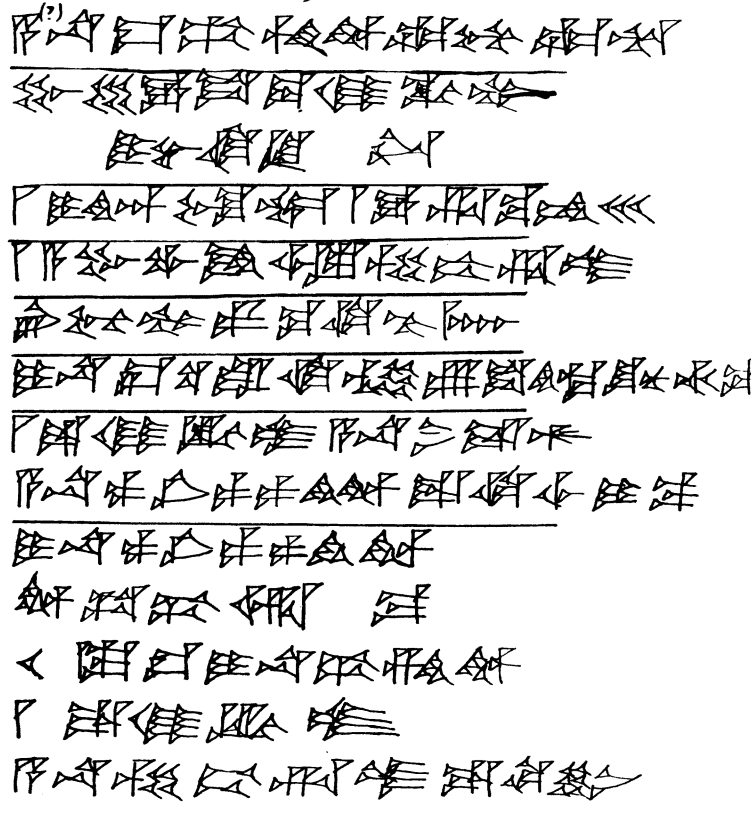

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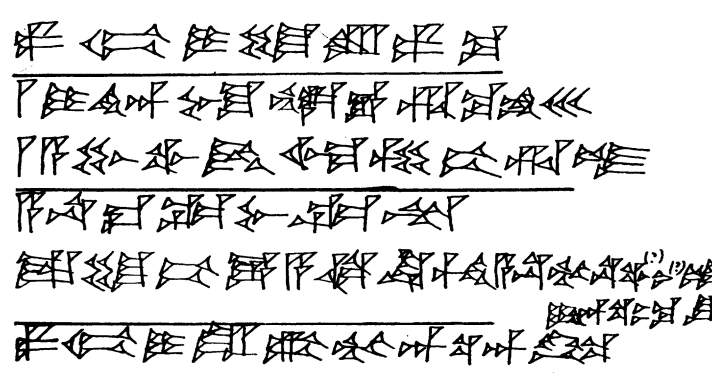

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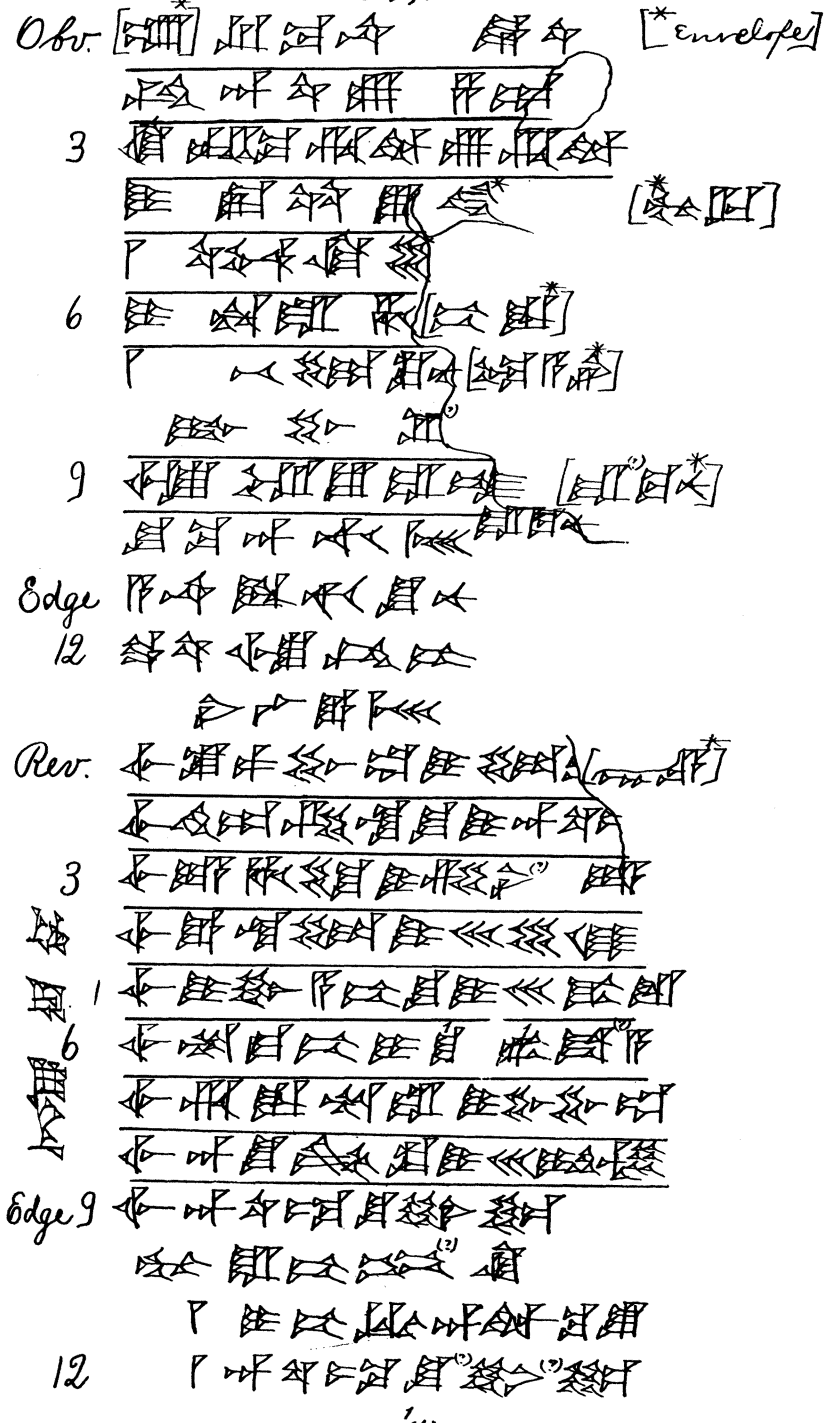

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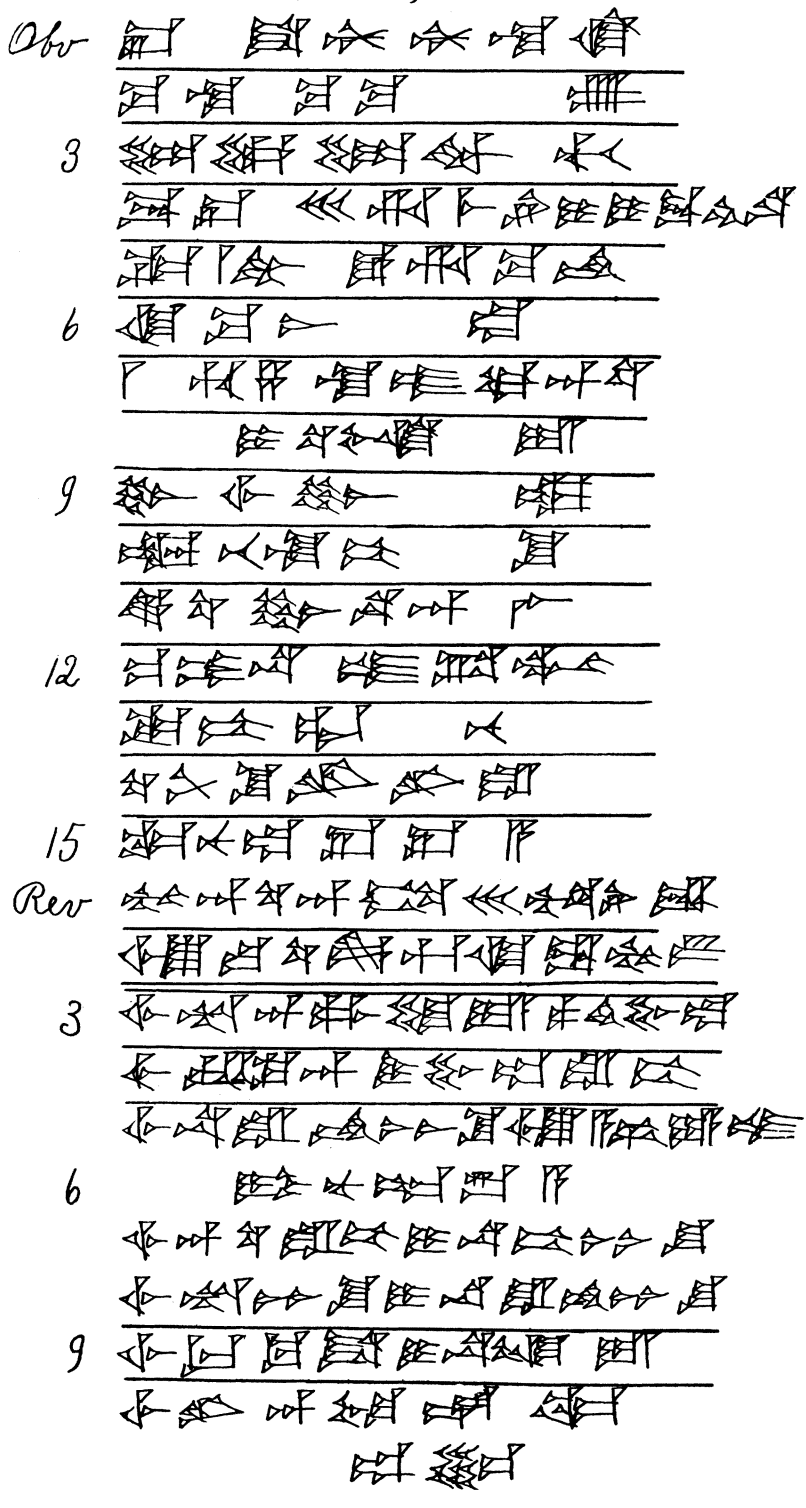

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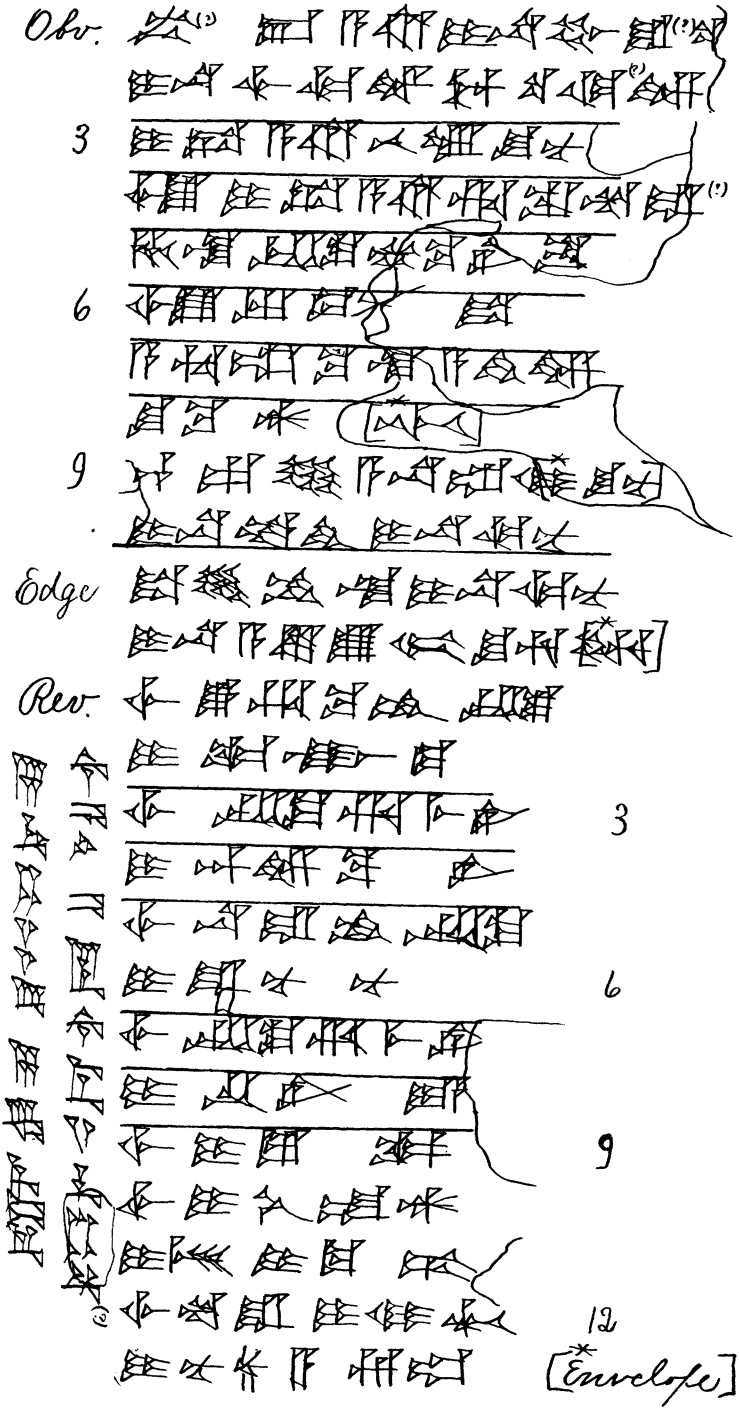

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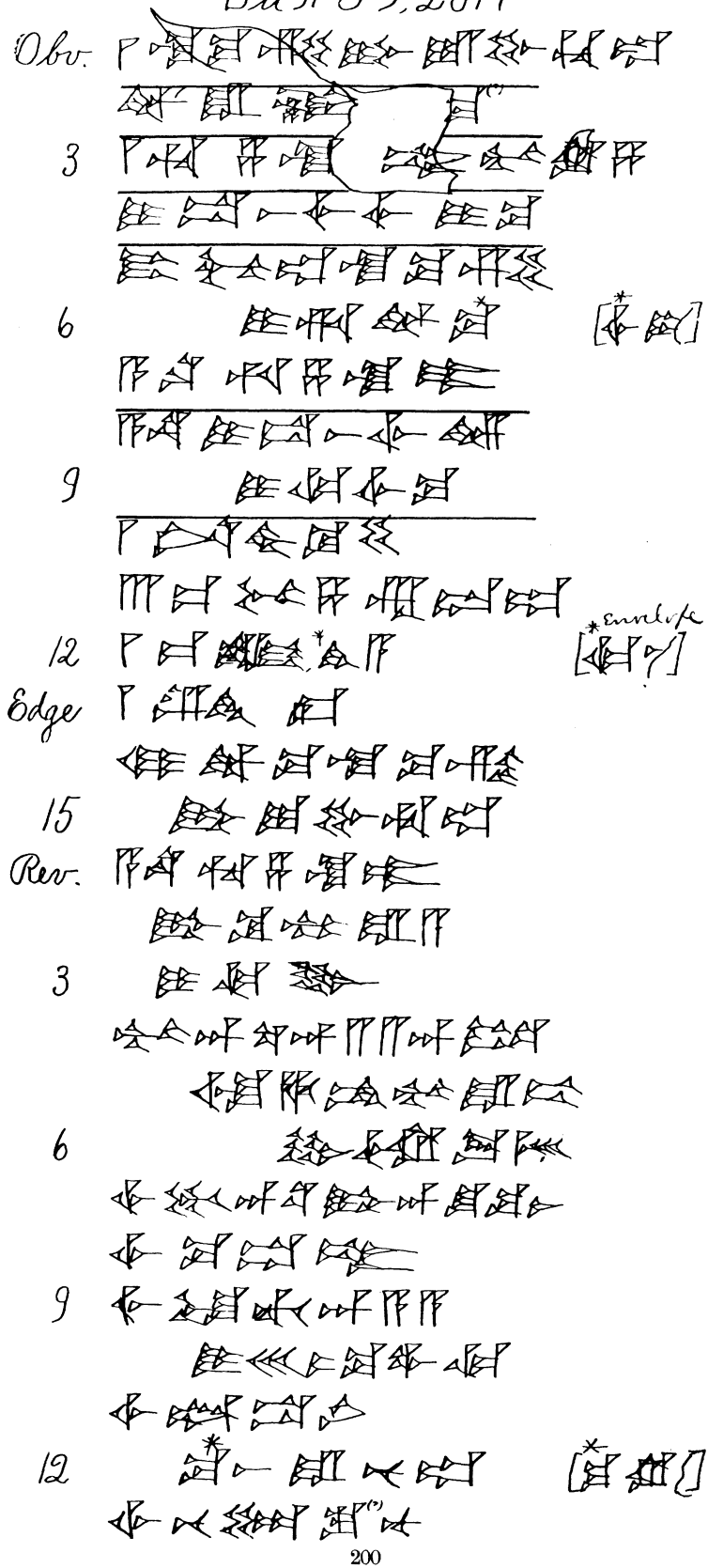

OBVERSE
Bu. 91–5–9, 2189A

OBVERSE
Bu. 91–5–9, 2184A

REVERSE
Bu. 91–5–9, 2184A

REVERSE
Bu. 91–5–9, 2189A

LEFT-HAND EDGE.—Bu. 91-5-9, 2184A

LEFT-HAND EDGE.—Bu. 91-5-9, 2189A

EDGE.—Bu. 91-5-9, 2184A

EDGE.—Bu. 91-5-9, 2189A